

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of vacuum packaging a product comprising the steps of:
extending a cutting blade and a connected heat bar as one element against a bag having an open end and a closed distal end;
cutting a portion of said bag with said cutting blade;
retracting the cutting blade and the connected heat bar as one element;
evacuating air from inside said bag through the cut portion;
heating the connected heat bar; and
extending the cutting blade and the connected heat bar as one element with the connected heat bar contacting a part of said bag spaced from the portion of said bag cut with said cutting blade toward the distal closed end.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said extending steps further comprise the step of inflating an air bladder connected to said connected cutting blade and heat bar.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said cutting blade and heat bar are actuatively connected and are connected to a lid of a vacuum packaging apparatus and said extending steps comprise the step of lowering said cutting blade and heat bar downwardly from said lid.
4. The method of claim 1, further including the step of melting said bag when said heat bar extends against said bag.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said cutting step comprises the formation of a multiplicity of intermittent slits in said bag.
6. The method of claim 1, further including the step of locating an open end of said bag outside of a sealed base and lid of a vacuum packaging device.
7. The method of claim 6, further including the step of evacuating a portion of the air in said vacuum packaging device before said cutting step.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the extending steps comprise connecting said cutting blade and said heat bar to a first end of each arm of a pair of arms, and rotatably connecting said arms at their second ends to a lid of a vacuum packaging device.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the cutting blade and the heat bar are connected and the extending and retracting steps comprise simultaneously extending and actuating the cutting blade and heat bar.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the air is evacuated after the cutting blade is retracted.
11. A mechanism for use with a vacuum packaging device which vacuum seals a bag, the mechanism having a base with a cavity therein and a lid, and said mechanism comprising:
 - a cutting blade;

a heat bar connected to the cutting blade;

actuating means for simultaneously actuating said cutting blade and connected heat bar, said actuating means mounted to the lid of said vacuum packaging device, said actuating means for extending the cutting blade and the connected heat bar as one element with the connected heat bar contacting a part of said bag spaced from a portion of said bag cut with said cutting blade toward a distal closed end of the bag.

12. The mechanism of claim 11, wherein said means for actuating comprises an air bladder.

13. The mechanism of claim 11, wherein said cutting blade has a first side and a second side and cutting teeth formed in only one of said sides.

14. The mechanism of claim 11, wherein said cutting blade has at least one set of cutting teeth separated from another set of cutting teeth.

15. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein said cutting teeth extend along an edge of said blade, said sets of cutting teeth separated by at least one slot extending into said blade along said edge.

16. The mechanism of claim 11, wherein said heat bar comprises a heatable wire mounted in a base and covered by a covering.

17. The mechanism of claim 11, further including an air bladder connecting plate, said cutting blade and heat bar connected to said plate.

18. The mechanism of claim 11, further including an anvil mounted to said base of said vacuum packaging device.

19. The mechanism of claim 18, wherein said anvil comprises a neoprene material.

20. The mechanism of claim 11, wherein the cutting blade and heat bar are actuatingly coupled.